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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 000466

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/C, S/USSES  
NSC FOR GAVIN  
LONDON FOR POL - LORD  
PARIS FOR POL - BAIN AND KANEDA  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR AU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [FR](#) [SU](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: CHAD: FRENCH HERE CONTINUE BULLISH ON CHAD-SUDAN,  
REBEL RETURNS, AND POLITICAL REFORM PROCESS

REF: A. N'DJAMENA 401  
[1](#)B. N'DJAMENA 457

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SUMMARY  
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[1](#)1. (SBU) French DCM Erwan de Gouvello gave DCM an example of his nation's continued optimism about the prospects for Chad-Sudan rapprochement, GOC outreach to Chad rebels, and Chad's own progress toward improved standards of governance, based on the October 14-21 visit of Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno to Paris. Although the Deby visit was nominally private in nature, Deby did have meetings with President Sarkozy, among others, did successful outreach to former regime opponents, and gave interviews to Le Figaro and Radio France Internationale.

[1](#)2. (SBU) French policy is pro-regime and the French interpretation of events here inevitably takes on a pro-Deby glow, with accomplishments maximized and deficiencies minimized. Even so, we and the other more critical members of the diplomatic community here generally share France's current positive and optimistic sense of the way things have been going recently. One key question is what will become of returned rebels and regime opponents such as Soubiane as they reenter public life in Chad. Many of them condition their returns on being offered senior positions. The rumor that we and the French hope will remain just that and not/not materialize is the buzz that Soubiane will get the MFA: We think that Faki is doing an outstanding job as FORMIN and hope he will continue in that key position for some time.  
END SUMMARY.

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GALLIC OPTIMISM:  
SUDAN AND JEM  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) Gouvello told DCM that France thought Chad was in better shape at present than it had been in many previous months, both in terms of relations with Sudan (including the Chad rebels) and domestic politics. Gouvello claimed that Deby had struck his French interlocutors as "quite tired of the JEM," having come to see it as an encumbrance particularly now that mutual confidence-building measures with Khartoum had been proposed. According to Gouvello, Deby was concerned that the JEM was "out of control" militarily,

and unwilling to let his own nation's reputation on the human rights front be further tarnished by JEM actions for which the Chadian National Army might find itself held accountable.

¶4. Gouvello confirmed that Deby had spoken positively about the October 10 visit of Sudanese Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salahuddin to N'Djamena, and seemed relatively hopeful that the Sudanese side would manage to "take a concrete step," namely to canton Chad rebels far from the Chadian border. Deby expressed frustration that the international community had been slow to appreciate the problems that the Chadian rebels had posed and would continue to pose if they could not be brought under control. He asked France to put pressure on Sudan to proceed with cantoning them, after which Deby made clear that he would demonstrate to Sudanese visitors that anti-Sudan rebels were no longer welcome in Chad and that there were "no JEM military bases" in Chad.

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OUTREACH TO OPPONENTS  
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¶5. (SBU) While in Paris, Deby met with Chadian regime opponent Mahamat Nahor N'Gawara, who informed Deby that he was prepared to end his exile and return to Chad. Gouvello did not have a read-out of that session, but he did note that France saw the rebel return process as essentially working on its own incremental terms, and that the arrival of key former rebels such as the Movement Nationale's Ahmat Hasaballah Soubiane, who came back to N'Djamena October 18, and exiled dissidents such as Nahor, would increase momentum for additional returns and for national reconciliation.

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POLITICAL REFORM  
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¶6. (SBU) As for Chadian domestic politics, Gouvello said that France believed Deby was pursuing various domestic betterment projects because he saw that improving his country's circumstances was his role, and because doing so was good electoral politics. The subject of Chadian elections had come up in several of Deby's meetings, said Gouvello. The French had the impression that Deby was committed to holding them in 2010-2011, as he had stated publicly to RFI, although "one never knows in Chad," said Gouvello.

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COMMENT  
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¶7. (SBU) As noted in Ref A, French policy is pro-regime and French interpretation of events here inevitably takes on a pro-Deby glow, with accomplishments maximized and deficiencies minimized. Even so, we and the other more critical members of the diplomatic community generally share France's positive and optimistic sense of the way things have been going recently.

¶8. (SBU) As indicated in Ref B, one key question is what will become of returned rebels and regime opponents such as Ahmat Soubiane once they reenter public life in Chad. Many of these figures condition their returns on being offered senior positions. The rumor that we and the French hope will remain just that and not/not materialize is the buzz that Soubiane will get the MFA: We think that Faki is doing an outstanding job as FORMIN and we hope he will continue in that key position for some time. END COMMENT.

¶9. (U) Minimize considered.  
NIGRO